

Courtesy cars rescuing drivers in I-15 construction zone

Genelle Pugmire - Daily Herald | Posted: Monday, June 14, 2010 12:25 am

Motorists who run out of gas, have a flat tire or some other car problem along the Interstate 15 Core project between Main Street in Lehi and Main Street in Spanish Fork will now have help within minutes to get them going again, or pulled off the road.

Two courtesy cars drive the 24 mile section both north and south watching for stranded drivers, debris and other things that would slow traffic during the construction, 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

"A Courtesy Patrol was one of the strengths of the Provo River construction company's proposal to keep people moving," I-15 Core project spokeswoman Heather Barnum said. The idea is to not only keep things moving, but to keep people safe.

Most of the hired drivers have a history driving trucks and other delivery vehicles. The courtesy vehicles are clearly marked and look like a maintenance vehicle with lights on the roof. Barnum said they drive about 400 miles a day in 12-hour shifts back and forth along the construction corridor. They are also equipped with tow bars to help get cars off the road.

In less than three weeks one vehicle has chalked up 11,000 miles on the odometer. Barnum also said these drivers already have all kinds of stories. Maureen Wingert is the subject of one of those stories.

Wingert was helping a friend move from Provo to Springville. Her car was loaded and they were just south of the Center Street exit.

"The tire just went," she said. "It was very scary. I called my son in Payson to come help. As we were waiting this truck pulled up. The man asked if I would like him to change the tire."

Wingert said it was nighttime and she didn't even know there was such a thing as a courtesy patrol. She said he was fast and by the time her son arrived from Payson he was just finishing.

"He really saved us," Wingert said.

Barnum said the courtesy patrol is also great for police officers, who can keep their mind and attention on other things.

"This helps free up the Utah Highway Patrol to do other things than help with flat tires," Barnum said.

Wingert's son and others traveling to and from the south part of the county should be aware of the first closure and bridge removal this week.

Construction teams are scheduled to close I-15 both northbound and southbound on Saturday at 10 p.m. to 11:30 a.m. Sunday to remove the 2700 North bridge in Spanish Fork (1600 South in Springville). During the freeway closure, drivers on northbound I-15 will be detoured around the construction at the Spanish Fork Main Street exit and southbound at the Springville 400 South/S.R. 77 exit to Spanish Fork Main.

The bridge, one of 55 being replaced and restored as part of the project, will be closed for 180 days. Local traffic can take suggested alternate routes of Main Street in Spanish Fork, or S.R. 51 to 400 South/S.R. 77 in Springville. A map of alternate routes is available online at udot.utah.gov/i15core.

UDOT encourages drivers to plan ahead and stay informed to avoid delays by signing up for weekly e-mail updates at udot.utah.gov/i15core, becoming a Facebook fan at facebook.com/i15core and following on Twitter at twitter.com/i15core. Text updates are also available by texting "i15core" to 83043.

Lehi-Lindon Area

Upcoming Construction Activities:

- Utah Power will close northbound and southbound I-15 at 500 East in American Fork on Wednesday and Friday nights to relocate power lines. Use State Street as an alternate.
- 500 East bridge in American Fork: Now through early August, southbound I-15 will be restricted to three lanes for 500 feet on either side of the bridge. Motorists should anticipate reduced speeds and moderate travel delays during commute times. Crews will install steel bridge supports for the center bridge column. This work will be performed during the day. Nearby residents and businesses should expect noise and some vibration with this activity.
- Sam White Lane bridge in Pleasant Grove/American Fork: Beginning this week, crews will install steel bridge supports for the center bridge column. This work will be performed during the day. Nearby residents and businesses should expect noise and some vibration with this activity.

Ongoing Construction Activities

- West frontage road between Storrs Avenue and 100 East in American Fork: Through mid-July, the road will be closed for water and gas line installation. This closure will be in effect 24 hours a day. Motorists can use 400 South and 1100 South as alternate routes.
- I-15 from 500 East in American Fork to 200 South in Lindon: Shoulder work continues along I-15 in both directions. Motorists can expect slight lane shifts throughout the area.
- Now through the middle of August, I-15 southbound will be restricted to three lanes for 500 feet on either side of the 500 East bridge in American Fork. Crews will be installing steel bridge supports for reconstruction of the interchange. Motorists should anticipate moderate travel delays during commute times.
- Speed limits on southbound I-15 between American Fork Main Street and University Parkway have been reduced to 55 mph. Reduced speeds will protect motorists and construction crews as work commences along the freeway mainline. Motorists should use caution and will experience some delay while traveling through the area. Please use TravelWise strategies to reduce delays.

Orem Area

Upcoming Construction Activities

- I-15 between 1600 North and 800 North in Orem: Crews have begun installing glare screens on top of the median barriers to protect drivers and work area crews from headlight glare and improve work area traffic flow.
- North and southbound I-15 between 1600 North and Center Street in Orem: By the week of June 21, the exit-only lanes will be repainted as general travel lanes and crews will shift traffic to the outside for reconstruction of the median. Motorists should use extra caution when entering and exiting I-15 in these areas.
- Orem Center Street Area: June 26 and 27, crews will perform short-term full closures of Orem Center Street for partial demolition of the Center Street bridge on both the northbound and

southbound sides of the structure. This work involves removing the outer edges of the existing structure in preparation for future expansion of the bridge.

Ongoing Construction Activities

- North and Southbound I-15 between 1600 North and 800 North in Orem: Through the middle of June, I-15 will be reduced to three lanes in each direction while crews remove the median barrier and reconstruct the median. The southbound exit-only lane from 1600 North to 800 North has been closed for the duration of the project. Please use extra caution and give way to drivers in this area as the normal traffic pattern for merging onto and off of I-15 southbound has changed.
- Northbound I-15 between University Parkway and University Avenue: Through mid-June, crews continue tree and topsoil removal and clearing of the right-of-way in the shoulder area. Crews will begin building retaining walls within the next few weeks.
- Drainage installation and subgrade work is also underway along the shoulder in this area. Crews are working 24 hours a day. Large dump trucks are hauling material into the work area at night. Local residents should expect noise associated with trucks and other heavy equipment working nearby.
- 2000 South in Orem/2000 North in Provo: Flaggers are posted along the road to allow heavy trucks to enter and leave the area safely. Please be aware and follow their directions.

Provo-Spanish Fork Area

Upcoming Construction Activities

- Southbound off-ramp from I-15 to Center Street in Provo: Through the month of June, crews will prepare the ramp for freeway widening. The ramp will remain open, but motorists should expect traffic shifts on the ramp. A temporary traffic signal will be installed at the intersection of the off-ramp and Center Street. The signal is expected to be operational in late June or early July. Installation of the signal is in preparation for demolition of the flyover bridge from southbound I-15 to eastbound Center Street. This bridge is expected to be removed in July.
- Crews have begun pile driving for construction of a temporary bridge at 600 South. Crews will be working from 7 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. Area residents can expect additional construction noise and possible vibration. Construction of the temporary bridge at 920 South will begin in mid-June. Work on both bridges will involve material hauling, pile driving and other work on the east side of I-15. Motorists should expect some lane restrictions and travel delays.
- Northbound I-15 between Springville and Spanish Fork: Crews are tentatively scheduled to shift the northbound lanes of I-15 between state Route (S.R.) 75 and 2700 North in Spanish Fork at night June 10 and between S.R. 75 and S.R. 77 at night on June 15.
- 2700 bridge in Spanish Fork (1600 South in Springville): Beginning June 18, the bridge will be closed for six months. Motorists should use 2550 West S.R. 51 to access S.R. 77 (400 South in Springville) as an alternate route. In order to demolish the bridge, I-15 will be closed in both directions June 18-20: from 10 p.m. Friday to 7:30 a.m. Saturday, from 9 p.m. Saturday to 11:30 a.m. Sunday and from 9 p.m. Sunday to 5:30 a.m. Monday. Motorists traveling I-15 during these hours will be detoured along Spanish Fork Main Street and S.R. 77 (400 South in Springville).
- 300 West in Spanish Fork: June 18, 21, and 22, 300 West will be closed for safety reasons as crews begin construction of a temporary freeway bridge over 300 West.. Motorists and pedestrians will need to use 1600 North or 800 North to Main Street as alternate routes.
- Southbound I-15 at Main Street in Spanish Fork: Work began last week to construct a temporary bridge over Main Street. Pedestrian access may be limited, but no lane restrictions are expected on Main Street.

Ongoing Construction Activities

- Southbound I-15 between University Parkway and Provo Center Street (s-curve area): Work continues to widen the southbound side of I-15. Speeds are reduced to 55 mph; lanes are narrowed and shifted. Motorists should anticipate delays during heavy commute times and during holiday weekends. Once this area is complete in the fall, southbound traffic will be shifted onto the widened area and crews will begin reconstructing northbound I-15. Drainage installation and subgrade work is also underway along the shoulder in this area. Crews are working 24 hours a day. Large dump trucks are hauling material into the work area at night. Local residents should expect noise associated with trucks and other heavy equipment working nearby.
- 2000 South in Orem/2000 North in Provo: Flaggers are posted along the road to allow heavy trucks to enter and leave the area safely. Please be aware and follow their directions.
- Southbound I-15 at the railroad tracks, 820 North and 2000 North in Provo: Through the end of June, crews will perform pile driving operations for temporary bridges at the Union Pacific Railroad and UTA tracks and at 820 North and 2000 North in Provo (2000 South in Orem). This work will be performed during the day.
- 820 North in Provo under I-15: Flaggers are posted under I-15 at 820 North in Provo to assist construction vehicles in accessing the work zone. Please pay attention and follow flagger instructions.
- Northbound I-15 between University Avenue in Provo and Spanish Fork Main Street: Work to temporarily widen I-15 continues. All lanes in each direction will remain open during the day with possible lane restrictions at night.
- Southbound I-15 ramp at U.S. Highway 6: Through at least the first of July, crews will be building the new ramp. Crews will be working along the shoulders and median of I-15 in this area. Motorists should expect traffic shifts and lane closures during off-peak hours.
- Northbound I-15 between Springville and Spanish Fork: Drainage installation and subgrade work continues. Crews will be working in this area 24 hours a day, six days a week. Northbound I-15 will be restricted to two lanes intermittently from 9 p.m. to 5:30 a.m. Motorists should anticipate minor delays.